

# **EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT**

**East Providence, City Hall**

**145 Taunton Avenue**

**East Providence, Rhode Island 02914**

**May 24, 2011**

## **Open Session**

**Mr. Tsonos, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:30PM. School Committee Members present: Luisa Abatecola, Stephen Furtado, Chrissy Rossi, Ryan Tellier and Charles Tsonos. Also present: Dr. Mario F. Cirillo, Jr., Superintendent of Schools and Andrew Thomas, Esq.**

**The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag & a Moment of Silence were observed.**

**Student Liaison Report – Andrew Butler presented a report.**

**Student/Teacher Recognition – Oldham School Principal, Patricia Barlow and Assistant Principal, Cindy Sadler and Dr. Nadine Lima, Principal of Whiteknact School and their students made a presentation to thank all who participated in the Rebuilding America Project, which included improvements at their schools.**

**Motion by Mrs. Rossi for public comment, seconded by Mr. Furtado.  
Vote 5-0.**

**Public Comment I – Wendy Joering spoke in favor of establishing full day Kindergarten at Francis School.**

## **Reports: Superintendent's Report**

### **Organizational Restructuring Phase I**

**Dr. Cirillo presented a High School Reorganization plan designed to create a more efficient organization which focuses on teaching and learning. After a review of the reality of limited resources, the plan was designed to ensure better utilization of resources to ensure increased student achievement. The RI Basic Education Plan calls for the district to examine the current structure of the delivery of services considering the following five topics:**

- Lead the focus on Learning and Achievement,**
- Recruit, support and retain highly qualified staff**
- Guide the implementation of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**
- Use information for planning and accountability**
- Engage families and the Community**

**The plan called for the elimination of one Assistant Principal, one PBGR Coordinator, fourteen stipend teacher liaisons, ten teacher assistants and four educational specialists. The projected reorganization will create two Deans of Discipline whose main focus will address daily crises and discipline issues; the elimination of the liaisons, PBGR coordinator and the teacher assistants will enable the district to reallocate resources and provide additional support to**

special education students and allow for much needed initiatives such as math labs, remediation supports and interventions and three additional highly qualified teachers in the core content areas.

Discussion regarding the layoffs of teacher assistants. Dr. Caswell explained that due to a RI Department of Education requirement that students be taught by highly qualified teachers who are certified in the specific content area being taught, we have been strongly encouraged to rectify our situation immediately and we will try to address the same access and equity of grade level district-wide.

Mrs. Rossi asked if this would address the issues heard from special education teachers that students learn at fourth grade level in grade 9 and when taking NECAPS they do not have the exposure they need.

Dr. Caswell explained that this should remedy those situations, they will have the opportunity to learn the material and may or may not be proficient; this should improve scores in a few years' time. Dr. Cirillo explained that this is not a dollars and cents issue, but to address the special education population; one of the focus points of the BEP is that all students have access and equity and we have made strides to do that district-wide. Waddington School has been commended for that. At the high school we have no way for teachers to be trained as administrators; part of the BEP calls for professional development which will allow for individuals to test the waters for this career path.

Discussion: plan increases learning experiences for special education students and allows for full day Kindergarten across the board. Discussion regarding the cost savings; Dr. Cirillo: all the pieces not in place yet; more work to be done administratively.

**Colleen Kinder, a teacher assistant for a student at Francis School spoke about the effect this will have on students; these are the lowest paid people on the payroll who are not there for the money but care about their students. She questioned the amount of savings gained from the layoff of nine teacher assistants and felt the plan made no sense; kids will be affected, since they look to support staff for help; she felt this was a great injustice to the community.**

**Dr. Cirillo explained that this was not an easy decision for him to put this in place, but he has the responsibility to do what is in the best interest of all children; there are overriding issues which have to take precedence; we are out of compliance with RIDE regulations; the plan will not leave any child unattended.**

**Debra Branco, a teacher assistant at Whiteknact School did not understand how this benefits kids; she spoke about the visual support class; she would like everyone to visit that program; there does not seem to be enough assistants now; she felt this would not benefit the kids since they need consistency; this is a safety issue; there are unfilled positions now. Mrs. Abatecola asked if there are unfilled positions.**

**Dr. Cirillo received input from all principals and the plan was well thought out; he would never jeopardize the education of children; this is a compliance issue; he envisioned full day Kindergarten and there were complex issues with Title I funds; he appreciated the comments, but administrators reviewed all the issues involved; there have been administrative cuts, teachers placed on layoff; it was a difficult decision to make. This plan is more efficient and focused on the**

education of children and was not done on a whim.

Cathy Grillo asked for clarification that every school will have full day Kindergarten; she had full confidence that no child will be in danger and that this would save money for the city.

Maureen Buckett has worked 18 years as a teacher assistant; all assistants are highly qualified; they put the kids first and keep them safe; restricted students will need more support with the changes; she thinks this is jumping the gun and that we should see how this plan works before getting rid of people.

Tom Acedo, whose wife is a teacher assistant at Meadowcrest, said that she takes her job seriously and has gone to seminars to learn her craft. He thought that people should be hired based on merit and not seniority and we should not be letting people go who do the best job.

Dr. Cirillo said he is obligated to honor the contract which calls for seniority based layoffs, but the new RIDE Basic Education Plan calls for seniority not to have as much clout; it is only one of the items to be considered for layoffs; this will be discussed in the negotiations process.

**Personnel Report on Retirements/Resignations/Leaves of Absence**

#### **RETIREMENT**

**Ann Murphy English Teacher – East Providence High School  
Effective end of 2010-2011 School Year**

#### **RESIGNATION**

**Jeffrey Michals-Brown Science Teacher – East Providence High School**

**Effective end of 2010-2011 School Year**

## **PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Pam Riel   ELL Teacher – Waddington Elementary School**

**Extended School Year Program (ESY)**

**1 Year Summer 2011**

**Margaret Furtado Supervisory Assistant – Francis Elementary School**

**(1 year) Effective 06/03/2011**

## **FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT**

**Sara Duarte   Physical Ed/Health Teacher – East Providence**

**High School Effective 09/06/2011 - 13 weeks**

**Finance Report – Mary King, Finance Director, reported that as of April 30th revenues were on target with the exception of the proposed loss of the educational jobs funds; on expenditures side, utilities are running high, but will slow down over the summer; we are awaiting rebates from National Grid on work being done; non-public transportation appears high due to how it was budgeted versus how it is actually getting booked due to uniform chart of accounts coding; there could be savings on insurance; equipment and capital outlay will show over due to equipment purchases; there are some other timing issues, but it will be reconciled by the end of the fiscal year.**

**Mrs. Whalen explained the reimbursements of insurance to retirees which was due to how we had thought we could increase life insurance rates to retirees based on age-related rates but later found out that there is a state law that says the rate charged to the retiree can never be more than the rate that was being charged at the time the employee retired. However, the school department still needs to pay the age-related rates for those retirees. Mr. Furtado asked if that increase had been implemented by Mr. Barham.**

#### **NECAP Scores/School Classifications: Dr. Caswell -**

**The past six years of NECAP student proficiency data has been compiled in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. The scores report district-wide progress by testing year. In Reading, grades 5, 7, 8 & 11 are showing steady progress while in mathematics; gr. 5 and 8 cohorts have remained steady since grade 3. Scores really drop off from grade 8 to 11 (almost by 50%). The new math curriculum K-12 should raise scores next year.**

**Nearly half of the juniors who achieve "substantially below proficiency" can be identified all the way back to grade 3 and by grade 7 nearly two-thirds can be identified. This is important information for our district so we can provide interventions earlier and support student learning of mathematics.**

**&#1607; Three schools did not meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) this year:**

**&#61607; Francis in Reading and mathematics for students with an IEP**

**&#61607; Whiteknact in mathematics for students in poverty\***

**&#61607; EPHS for graduation rate and in mathematics for students in poverty\***

**&#61607; Waddington was commended by the Board of Regents for making AYP two years in a row. \*Poverty is a new sub group for us this year.**

## **Consent Agenda**

**Approval of Minutes – Motion by Mrs. Abatecola to approve the minutes of the meeting held on May 4, 2011, seconded by Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0. Minutes of the meeting held on 5/10/11 were tabled to the next meeting.**

## **Action Items**

**Organizational Restructuring Phase I – Motion to approve by Mrs. Rossi, seconded by Mr. Furtado. Vote 5-0.**

## **Personnel Appointments/Recalls/Layoffs**

### **Recalls of Teachers:**

**Kayla Murphy Effective 2011/2012 school year (Due to Retirement)**



**Kimberly Maratto Effective 2011/2012 school year (Due to Leave of Absence)**

**Alisha Shorts Effective 2011/2012 school year (Due to Retirement)**

**Kelly Reese Effective 2011/2012 school year (Due to Resignation)**

**Allison Hunt Effective 2011/2012 school year (Due to Leave of Absence)**

**Layoffs (Changes in student programs for the 2011-2012 school year)  
Nine Teacher Assistants and Six Educational Specialists**

**Motion by Mr. Furtado to approve, seconded by Mrs. Rossi.  
Discussion regarding status of filling  
180-day custodial positions; to be included on next meeting agenda.  
Vote 5-0.**

**Requisitions – Bill List**

<b>Warrant #1091</b>	<b>5/4/11</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1126.110</b>
<b>Warrant #1092</b>	<b>5/4/11</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>15,275.00</b>
<b>Warrant #1100</b>	<b>5/19/11</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$ 27,446.00</b>
<b>Warrant #1101</b>	<b>5/19/11</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$ 5,400.00</b>
<b>Warrant #1094</b>	<b>5/11/11</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$ 2,646.13</b>

**Motion: Mrs. Rossi, seconded by Mrs. Abatecola. Vote 5-0.**

**Payroll Calendar 2011-12 – Motion by Mrs. Rossi to approve,  
seconded by Mrs. Abatecola. Vote 5-0.**

**Consolidation Analysis – Dr. Cirillo stated that the spreadsheet presented by Mrs. Rossi would be incorporated and completed by Maintenance, Human Resources and Finance Departments by June 1st.**

**Consolidation/Hiring Freeze – Mr. Tsonos had concerns moving forward on spending money and based on the situation we are in, would like to be cautious, only hiring on an as- needed basis when the information is brought to the School Committee.**

### **Old Business**

**Deficit Reduction Plan - Dr. Cirillo stated that a meeting is scheduled this week and he will be presenting a five-year projection.**

### **School Committee Recessed**

**Consolidation Efforts - PowerPoint by Mrs. Rossi on a Plan for Consolidation and Cost Savings. Summary of the plan is to: Continue to look for cost savings measures; begin consolidation with the city, agree to look into corporate sponsorships; agree to look into a full-time grant writer; agree to look into expanding Adult-Ed programs.**

### **New Business**

**Resolutions – Binding Arbitration Perpetual Contracts – Based on requests from School Committee, resolutions should be tabled to**

another date. Motion by Mrs. Rossi, seconded by Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0.

## **Public Comment II**

Cathy Grillo asked if the proceeds from additional programs at the Career & Technical School would go to the city or back into programs. Mrs. Rossi stated that the program would pay for itself and profit from additional courses would go back to the district.

Mrs. Rossi said that it is her opinion to look at the data sheets and plan to consolidate one department city-wide with the goal of looking at cost savings, giving a lot of thought whether it makes sense.

Mrs. Grillo was concerned about combining the Maintenance Department with the city; she had questions about timelines and guidelines and if a hiring freeze was imposed, the schools would not be able to hire a Facilities Manager. Parents worked hard to pass the construction bond, and she felt that the schools should hire a manager to oversee the project.

Mr. Tsonos commented that the adult education program would be a positive for the community even if revenue neutral and he would be in favor of it. Mr. Furtado would like to look at more of that type of program.

Dr. Caswell informed the School Committee that if Perkins funds were

used for day or night school, the funds have to go back into the program; if tuition is charged, it will generate funding and move away from using Perkins funds for night school.

## **Announcements**

**Dr. Cirillo announced:**

**&#61607; High school student, Angelina Chiong, won third place in the statewide 2011 “Safety is No Accident” contest for high school students and was honored in a ceremony at the State House.**

**&#61607; East Providence Schools were featured in a national publication, Education Week, highlighting the partnership with Bradley; he thanked all involved**

**&#61607; URI Providence will permanently display artwork by East Providence High School Students**

**&#61607; Commissioner of Education visiting East Providence School District tomorrow, May 25, 2011; he reviewed the schedule which included a discussion with the community beginning at 6:00PM.**

**Mr. Tellier congratulated the Martin Middle School Track Team for winning the State Championship.**

**Mr. Furtado wished acknowledge and thank all parents, staff and students who participated in the East Providence Local Advisory Committee for Special Education (EPLAC) Awards Night ; a Books are Wings Program on June 3rd**

**Mrs. Leddy, Principal of Francis School and Mrs. Barlow, Principal of Waddington and Oldham, thanked Dr. Cirillo and the School Committee for approving full day Kindergarten.**

**Mr. Tsonos announced that a meeting will be held on June 13th at St. Martha's Church, hosted by Rep. DaSilva regarding the Hardest Hit Fund, a RI Housing program to assist people having difficulty paying their mortgage.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Furtado to move to Executive Session for purposes of discussing:**

**Personnel - R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5(a) (1); Collective Bargaining, and Litigation/Pending Litigation according to R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5(a) (2), seconded by Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0.**

**A motion was made by Mrs. Rossi to return to Public Session, seconded by Mr. Tellier. A motion was made by Mrs. Rossi to seal the minutes of the executive session, seconded by Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0.**

**Report Executive Session Votes – Mr. Furtado announced that a vote had been taken in Executive session and unanimously approved to accept a personnel recommendation.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Furtado to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant**

**Stephen Furtado, Clerk of the Committee**